

Olympic Games National Houses - A Case Study of Rio 2016 Summer and PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympic Games

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Aim and Literature Review

Sanada (1996) describes the remarkable development of the early modern Olympic Games (1900, 1904, 1908) which were held as part of the World Expo. The concept of Hospitality Houses increasingly became part of the Olympic Games since Beijing 2008 Summer Games. Meanwhile, Osaki (2017) said, "The establishment of a Hospitality House was originally devised as a place for families of athletes who cannot enter the Olympic village (players village) to spend with their players, the 1992 Barcelona Games Heineken Group of Beer Manufacturing Company opened for the Dutch team (Osaki, 2017, p.61).

There are three types of "Hospitality Houses", each with their respective objectives:

- "National House" led by the government and/or the National Olympic Committee (NOC). The "National House" is also an office substitute for delegation, athletes and NOC officials in key positions in each country, with the aim of providing a relaxing environment during non-competition periods during the event.
- "Sports House" led by sports organizations (e.g. Volleyball House, NBA Houses). Sports organizations, such as International Sports Federations, generally have established athletes' high-performance centers aiming to support athletes.
- "Sponsor House" led by corporates

These houses usually showcase sponsor products or services, engaging new customers.

This study will be limited to National Houses only.

The primary goals of the study are to:

- determine the status of National houses from the perspectives of their objectives
- document easy-to-understand examples of sustainability and legacy of National Houses that were present in Rio de Janeiro (2016) and PyeongChang (2018).
- assess the awareness of National Houses regarding opportunities to positively impact society.

Theoretical Background and Methodology

This study uses Booms and Bitner's (1981) service marketing mix (7Ps) theory was used to analyse a selection of Hospitality Houses that was present at the Rio 2016 Summer and PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympic Games. Included were National Houses that responded to a call to participate in this research; the National Houses of 16 countries in Rio 2016 and 12 countries in PyeongChang 2018. Unstructured interviews with the 31 houses were conducted, completed with additional web research and observations made during the visit of the houses. Based upon these sources, short case studies (500 – 600 words) were written.

Results and Discussion

Three types of objectives were identified amongst the National Houses:

- a) The athlete lounge aims to athletes having a place to relax and enjoy the Games. The major feature of this type is an atmosphere of class and history provided by the old home of old aristocrats, church, or museum.

- b) The VIP saloon often uses a part of a commercial building, school or public facility. These facilities are usually restructured to provide an exclusive ambiance to high-level guests.
- c) The showcase often a publicly accessible and open space, such as a park or beach to showcase the countries' cultural highlights as well as business opportunities.

In addition, examples related to sustainability and legacy were identified but little used for the engagement of the general public on the topic of sustainability or legacy of the Olympic Games. Furthermore, Hospitality Houses have a little awareness on either their latent as well as actual positive impact on society.

Conclusion

The study has provided an overview of the characteristics of National Houses at the Olympic Games and summarized the examples of National Houses that had a positive impact on societal issues. Countries have different marketing objectives when designing an Olympic Games National House. Activities that take place in and around the Hospitality Houses do have the potential to positively impact the hosting region or the country itself. However, there is little awareness of this potential and a lack of understanding on how to maximize or monitor this positive impact. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals could be considered as a framework to structure and monitor the opportunities of National Houses at future Olympic Games.

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